

Flat-Rate Pricing for MEDLINE: Evaluation of a Pilot Project

D. Fitzgerald*, T. Flemming*, K.A. McKibbon+ R. B. Haynes+,

Health Sciences Library(*), Health Information Research Unit, Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics(+), Faculty of Health Sciences, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

ABSTRACT

Academic Health Sciences Centres are interested in determining the most cost-effective approach to providing institutional access to MEDLINE and other health sciences databases. Approaches include providing MEDLINE subsets on institutional computers, stand-alone or networked CD-ROM workstations, or unlimited access to MEDLINE online. Increasingly, database vendors are recognizing the advantages of providing access to their online databases at flat-rate pricing arrangements[1]. The National Library of Medicine has been exploring this approach by making agreements with a number of institutions for pilot projects to study database usage patterns.

McMaster University Faculty of Health Sciences negotiated to be a site for the National Library of Medicine study of flat-rate pricing based on its involvement in numerous MEDLINE studies and the relatively high number of MEDLINE searchers on Faculty, and was the only Canadian site. Usage and cost information is presented here to illustrate that a great deal of work was required to implement this pilot project at McMaster and that usage was not as high as anticipated. Data from the baseline and follow-up questionnaires provide information on the participants of the program, their prior and anticipated use of MEDLINE and their reasons for making less use of the service than they had anticipated.

References

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